Formulating special plan for entertainment

†3024. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after fifty years of country's Independence, there are 75 crore people who are watching only DD-I channel;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider formulating special plan for the entertainment of such people;

(c) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) In satellite mode, 22 Doordarshan channels are available throughout the country and can be received by using appropriate dish antenna system or through cable network. In terrestrial mode, DDI and DII coverage is available to 89.6% and 35.9% population respectively. This coverage is expected to increase to about 91.3% and 45.5% respectively with the commissioning of the ongoing projects.

(b) and (c) It is the constant endeavour of Doordarshan to expand the coverage in hitherto uncovered areas depending upon availability of funds and inter-se-priorities. With a view to increase coverage, a Special Plan (both AIR & DD) amounting to Rs. 430 crores is already under implementation in Jammu & Kashmir. A Special package for covering North-Eastern States and Sikkim has also been approved in principle. The size and extent of the schemes under this package would depend upon approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee. Alternative technology options are also being considered to cover the hitherto uncovered areas.

Telecast of awareness programmes on dreaded diseases

3025. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

†. Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) the details of the programmes telecast on television by her Ministry to spread awareness among the masses in preventing and controlling dreaded diseases like Cancer, AIDS etc, for the past three years;

(b) whether her Ministry is monitoring such telecasts to know whether masses are benefited from such telecasts or not; and

(c) if not, whether her Ministry will consider taking up innovating ways to spread awareness through the national channel?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (c) Prasar Bharati has intimated that the programmes on dreaded diseases like Cancer, AIDS, etc. are being regularly telecast as messages, spots, discussions, interviews etc. in health programmes of all Regional Kendras of the country. DD-1 Channel of Doordarshan is also telecasting various programmes. The record of such programmes, telecast through the Regional Kendras, is not maintained centrally.

Ceiling on Charges by TV Channels

3026. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether advertisement has been the main revenue earner for the T.V. channels;

(b) the reasons for shifting of burden to subscribers who are subjected to frequent hikes;

(c) whether Government propose to protect the common man by imposing a ceiling on charges demanded by the T.V. channels; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) This information is not maintained in the Ministry. However, as per the recent report of Economic Times on 'Entertainment (2001-02)', earnings through advertisements appear to be one of the main sources of revenue for T.V. channels.

(b) to (d) There are no legal provisions for Government to